



"Clean Version of Amended CLAIMS"

A¹ 23. (amended) The method of claim 22, wherein said step of heating further comprises moving said first end of said preform assembly longitudinally into a heated zone of a furnace means such that fusion begins at said first end and progresses toward said second end as said preform assembly is moved through said heated zone.

A² 32. (amended) The method of claim 14, wherein said second glass rods further comprise a co-dopant species for increasing the solubility of said one or more rare-earth dopant elements and for adjusting a refractive index.

A³ 34. (amended) A method for providing a glass preform for use as a source for drawing an optical fiber having a reduced capacity for propagation of amplified spontaneous emission, the method comprising the steps of:

collecting a plurality of first glass rods into a substantially contiguous bundle, wherein each of said first glass rods comprises a chemical composition and has a substantially uniform shape; and

removing and replacing one or more groups of contiguous first glass rods with an equivalent number of groups comprising second glass rods, said second glass rods comprising a chemical composition and having a substantially uniform shape, said second glass rods comprising a physical or chemical property having a different value than a value of said same physical or chemical property of said first glass rods, and wherein said second glass rods comprise a means for

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eliminating or substantially reducing propagation of amplified spontaneous emission;

A³ heating said contiguous bundle to a glass fusion temperature and causing said contiguous bundle to fuse to form a solid glass preform such that said chemical composition of each of said first glass rods is maintained in a location proximate or about coincident with a position of each said glass rods within said contiguous bundle.

A⁴ 38. (amended) The method of claim 35, wherein said means for eliminating or substantially reducing propagation of amplified spontaneous emission comprises a metal dopant.

A⁵ 49. (amended) The method of claim 39, wherein said second glass rods further comprise a co-dopant species for increasing the solubility of said one or more rare-earth dopant elements and for adjusting a refractive index.

A⁶ 51. (amended) The method of claim 39, wherein said first quantity of glass rods further comprise one or more dopant compounds for substantially reducing or eliminating amplified spontaneous emission.
